

March 16, 2000

*(Note: These are unedited and uncorrected transcripts)*



MR. LU: Distinguished Mr. Chairman and distinguished members, it's an honor to be invited to be with you. The religious belief freedom in China has suffered a great degradation last year in China, particularly because the National People's Congress passed in September a law against the cult, and such law enactment led all religious belief freedom to suffer an unprecedented threat.

There are four or five different so-called sect or cult labeled by them. These belong to the Christian faith. Roughly the followers are about five million in total. This comprises of the China Evangelistic Fellowship, the Total Scope Church, the Shelter Sects, the Disciple Sects, and the China Fountain Group. And currently there are designated as cult the Falun Gong, which has 70 million followers, and another one called the Qigong, also designated as a cult.

From last September on we estimated there are over thousands of the so-called house-church members being arrested. And there were over, at least, 20- to 30,000 Falun Gong members under arrest, and at least 5,000 Falun Gong members have been sent to the labor

camp. And over thousands of Falun Gong members has been dismissed from their jobs. There are about 600 leaders of the Falun Gong sect being arrested. About 3,000 Falun Gong centers are ordered to be closed. And I consider this as severest suppression of the religious group since 1989.

The National People's Congress' enactment of the against-cult law provided a very convenient weapon in order for the Chinese government to suppress this movement, spiritual movement, because such law has given the Chinese government very large authority to act under that law; because the labeling of the cult is very vaguely defined. It didn't say who has the authority to designate a group as a cult. And therefore, only a few small group of people from the Chinese Communist Party have such right to do so. And therefore, whoever is not incorporated with the Chinese Communist Party may be arbitrarily labeled as a cult. One such sect is being labeled a cult. All the followers are members of that cult.

In the past, the Chinese Communist Party can only use the illegal assembly as a ground for detaining people. Now with this law passed, even without the assembly, if you are part of the cult, you can be arrested. Now, the two sectors called the China Evangelistic Fellowship and the China Fountain Group in Hunan has over one million followers. And they are a very mild group, and their teachings are very similar to the overseas or abroad Christian faith. However, they were also labeled as, quote, a cult last year.

Six leaders were sent to the forced labor camps. It is estimated that over thousands of the religious leaders were arrested since last October. A small town that has only 5,000 inhabitants in Ueda, 75 persons were arrested. Two weeks ago, there are 16 China Evangelistic Fellowship followers were arrested in Hunan.

The economic condition is not very good. Over 60 percent of the state-owned enterprise were in the red, and the people were let go from those enterprises. Over 20 million workers lost their job, and the unemployment rate is over 15 percent. The unemployment rate in the agricultural community is even worse. We estimate over 140 million peasants don't have work to do, and the unemployment rate is over 20 percent. And the demonstration against the government in 1999 is over 100,000 incidents.

It is because of the social instability and crisis which triggers the Chinese party to add additional oppression about this dissidents. And it is now a popular belief that the Chinese authority that Falun Gong and the house church are the most threatening force against China

Communist Party. They consider them as dangerous because of the three reasons: Number one, they have tremendous number of followers; number two, they have very strong leaders; number three, they have overseas connections.

Now, the popular, the official statistics rate the Christian as 12 million, Catholic, 5 million; but if you include the house church together, actually the Christian is 30 million, and the Catholic is 10 million. The reason for the disparity in the numbers is because the official statistics count only those which are registered in the religious bureau of the government. And a lot of people, for fear of oppression and other problems, choose not to register. That is why the difference in numbers.

Now, if you look at the Falun Gong, you can see that their books have been sold over 50 million copies. And therefore we say that the followers of Falun Gong probably will exceed 50 million followers. The Internet service has increased rapidly the connection and the communication between China and the outside world. And this is also an added concern of the Chinese Communist Party because they feel that there are external forces that may reinforce the strengths internally.

The basic belief and the objective of the Chinese Communist Party is to destroy the religious religion. I think that is a hidden agenda, and it is a policy that is so entrenched that it would not be changed. Even though they say that they tolerate the existence of religion, but I think they really don't mean it.

There are two treaties being signed, the international treaties being signed by the Chinese government. Such a treaty internationally signed has never been publicized in China. The people, Chinese people, do not know the contents of such treaties. So it is no wonder to me that because they sign it and don't really mean it, and therefore in the past two, three years you see further degradation in the religious freedom.

Now, we have the NATO bombing of the Yugoslav Chinese embassy. And because of that mistake, China took advantage of that and took quite a few number of backward measures in the religious field. And I hope that U.S. government will take a role in favor of voting to condemn the Chinese government in the human rights review in the United Nations. Thank you.